blem of hydrogen leakage was noticed in 6 sets in the last three years up to July, 1985. The requisite remedial measures have been taken in consultation with Russian experts.

**Telephone System in Calcutta**

659. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the telephone system in Calcutta is deteriorating;

(b) what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what steps the Government contemplate to remedy the situation;

(d) whether it is also a fact that there are a number of exchanges in the city which have outlived their normal span of life and need replacement; and

(e) whether the allocation for replacement and setting up of new exchanges has been reduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) Telephone service in Calcutta has shown improvement in respect of some key parameters over the past few years, though much remains to be acheived yet.

(b) Main reasons for unsatisfactory service are:—

1. Extensive damage caused to underground cables by various civic agencies and theft of telephone cables.

2. A third of exchange equipment has outlived its useful life.

(c) Following steps are contemplated to remedy the situation:—

(i) Replacement of life expired equipments in phases and introduction of electronic telephone exchanges.

(ii) Laying of underground cables in duets to avoid frequent damages to the cables.

(iii) Pressurisation of main cables to prevent ingress of water into them.

(iv) Use of jelly filled cables in the distribution network to prevent entry of water into the cables.

(v) Erection of more cabinets and pillars in the cable network to facilitate the speedy testing of faults and their rectification.

(vi) Replacement of old and badly damaged cables by new ones

(vii) Introduction of microwave and pulse code modulation system for inter exchange junction working.

(viii) Taking up the matter with the West Bengal Government and law and order people to minimise the cable thefts.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Yes, Sir. The allocation so far made is less than the amount proposed earlier due to lack of adequate equipment.

**Setting up of a crude stabilisation unit in Maharashtra**

660. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state whether Government have accepted